



QEF

queen elizabeth's
foundation for
disabled people

QEF Happening

Spring 2012

Newsletter for Queen
Elizabeth's Foundation
for Disabled People

Helping to build
a brighter future

See Inside

Accessible Holidays
Springtime for Ladies
Right Royal Patronage
A legacy for Life
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Jewellery Amnesty

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QEF works with people with physical and learning disabilities or acquired brain injuries to support them to achieve their goals for life.

Registered Charity No 251051

Despite all the economic gloom, 2012 can still be a great year - a festive spectacle with the Jubilee and Olympics – as well as a year when QEF develops vital new services which support disabled people.

Better together

As we digest the implications of the budget and continue to hear stories of retail closures and cuts to services it is all too easy to feel fearful and pessimistic about the future. We have all lived with the fact that the economy is in bad shape and the economic challenges are not only affecting our own individual lives but also hurting essential services that charities like QEF provide to disabled, vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

But I want to inject some more positive news which I hope will lift your spirits and encourage you as you read this newsletter over the breakfast table. And that good news is largely down to you and the help of precious friends, volunteers and individual donors. We have been greatly encouraged by the financial support which has remained at the same level as last year - the Spring and Autumn Ladies lunches and Guinness and Oyster Luncheon have been more popular than ever, our shops are all doing well and individual supporters have continued to be very generous.

I know that it is because of your help that we are able to develop and grow; in particular, those who have remembered us in their wills and have given us a "legacy for life".

At QEF we have been working very hard on developing a clear mission for the future – we call it our 2020 Vision. We want to create more opportunities in more disabled people's lives for them to realise their full potential. This vision is ambitious especially when set against such a turbulent and uncertain future for the country, however we believe that we can and should do more - in partnership with our supporters, volunteers, friends and other charities. Our comfort is looking for those we can work together with.

You may have found on our website www.qef.org.uk that we are offering

wheelchair accessible holidays through a linked website and, with a little more exploration, also find mobility and care products on sale or loan. The reason is that last November we merged the Voluntary Association of Surrey Disabled (VASD) into the QEF family of charities.

And in the last few days our trustees have also agreed a merger with MERU - a children's charity based in Epsom - which exists to improve life for children and young people with disabilities. They design and custom-make specialist equipment for use by young people.

These mergers demonstrate quite clearly how we and other charities can find common ground on which to deliver our services. But while the mergers provide obvious synergies and practical value to service delivery they still require funding as much as ever. At QEF we are determined that by working together with VASD, MERU and other charities that share our vision and purpose we can mitigate the effects of the difficult economic environment and ensure that our services survive into better times.

Better Together is what we will aim to start achieving in 2012. I take comfort in the shared passion and determination we all have to make a practical difference in disabled people's lives. That is what unites QEF and our family of charities. But the QEF family will need your support more than ever; attending one of our luncheons, climbing Ben Nevis with me in the autumn, volunteering in our shops, remembering us in your will, responding to one of our appeals or simply telling people about us and what we do. However you are able to help we are truly grateful.

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Wheelchair users spend a great deal of their lives meeting challenging physical obstacles; stairs, narrow doorways, high kerbs, gravel and so on. Travelling to new places can be a demanding experience and perhaps disappointing if access is limiting or impossible.

Accessible holidays on the Sussex coast

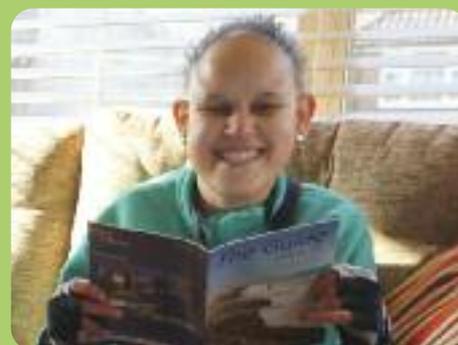
Major venues have been improving their accessibility and QEF is delighted that one of our service users recently had a great experience of Wembley for a cup final. However many existing smaller or older venues often retain constraints to access that defy reasonable modification.

Going on holiday is more than just getting from city to seaside. Accommodation needs to allow access to all areas for wheelchairs and a hoist in the bedroom and bathroom if required.

“It was a lovely day out. The properties were very nice, in peaceful areas and it was good to be by the sea.”

Wheelchair accessible holiday options are limited in the UK. However, with the recent QEF merger with the Voluntary Association for Surrey Disabled (VASD), there are self-catering accessible bungalows available on the West Sussex coast at Elmer Sands near Bognor Regis, Goring by Sea and a newly refurbished chalet at the Beach Holiday Village in Bracklesham Bay. The accommodation is wheelchair friendly, adapted for disabled people and provides a perfect retreat to enjoy a seaside holiday; with dogs allowed!

From QEF Independent Living Services, Shanna and Stephen, recently took a



road trip to explore Elmer Sands and Goring to give their opinions. Early February was not quite the holiday season but the sun shone beautifully and made the trip to the seaside an extremely enjoyable outing. Shanna said “It was a lovely day out. The properties were very nice, in peaceful areas and it was good to be by the sea.”

VASD is based in Dorking in Surrey, where there is a shop providing a wide range of products for disabled people, from walking aids and wheelchairs to personal health and innovative tools to help with tasks around the home. In addition VASD also lend equipment to people who have a temporary need, often for people who have an elderly relative visiting or who are recovering from an operation.

For more information on VASD, booking a holiday or short break please telephone Sue Lavington on 01306 741500 or visit www.vasd.org.uk.



Support from the business community is vital for QEF's work and can bring genuine and lasting benefits both for disabled people and your business.

ExxonMobil Take up the challenge

We work with a number of companies across the UK who engage with us in activities ranging from employing trainees who have undertaken vocational training through to volunteering at one of our centres or staff fundraising. QEF are delighted that ExxonMobil Leatherhead site employees have adopted QEF as their '2012 Charity of The Year'.

This followed a staff vote at the end of last year. Sophie Foale at ExxonMobil commented, "We give special focus to supporting the neighbourhoods

around our key business locations such as Leatherhead and last year in the UK we invested over £1.8 million on community projects and initiatives. The relationship with QEF has developed over the years with ExxonMobil staff working at QEF on volunteer days, taking part in a Funday for residents and trainees as well as donating to support brain injury rehabilitation work. In 2012 we are encouraging staff to fundraise for QEF in all sorts of ways and hope it will be a very successful year!"



Jewellery Amnesty Appeal

To celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee this year we are holding a Jewellery Amnesty.

If you have any unwanted, unloved, unworn or damaged jewellery, it is your chance to turn it into a precious gift. The Jewellery Amnesty Appeal welcomes any kind of jewellery, from bracelets, brooches, necklaces or watches to odd cufflinks, earrings or stones that you no longer wear or use. Any piece of jewellery, even if broken or damaged, will be gratefully received and either recycled, auctioned or sold via our shops to raise more funds.

Please ask your family, friends and colleagues to participate – you will also be helping to offset the harm to the environment caused by the mining of precious metals and stones.

If you wish to participate in the Amnesty Appeal please send your jewellery in a jiffy bag, using Royal Mail special delivery to: **Amnesty Appeal, QEF, Leatherhead Court, Woodlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BN.** If you would like more information please email appeals@qef.org.uk or call **Hanne Widmer** on **01372 841131.**



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Sue Witney breezes enthusiastically into the Fundraising office. “What have you got for me today?” she asks.

Spring time for ladies and lunching

The tasks vary visit to visit, from data input to stuffing envelopes or Sue’s particular favourite, re-ordering the stationery cupboard! Sue is a volunteer and her assistance is invaluable. Volunteers abound throughout QEF, from regular shop helpers to corporate working parties. All provide essential assistance to enable QEF to support disabled people to increase their independence and improve their opportunities for life.



No Connections

Unusually for a volunteer, Sue had no direct connection with QEF or disability. It was her love for shopping and having lunch with friends that led her to giving up time for QEF. Sue enjoyed attending the Ladies Lunches and had been doing so for around twelve years before Committee Chair, Sally Frost, recruited her to the Ladies Spring Lunch Committee. After 4 years Sally stepped down and Sue took over the reins.

As a practical and organised person the Committee tasks held no fear but the biggest test Sue found was standing in front of 400 ladies and

addressing them. “Terrifying” was how she described it although there was no demonstrable evidence.

The Logical Step

Because of attending Committee meetings at Leatherhead Court, Sue “got to see behind the scenes” of the Fundraising Department and the logical step was to offer to help. She had wanted to do a bit more for charity and QEF was the natural choice. The sheer variation of jobs was enjoyable and there were plenty of things to organise and tidy as well as spending time in front of a computer. Furthermore the camaraderie in the Department made the tasks that much more enjoyable.

Over time Sue has recognised change. QEF has become more focussed on growth and moving into the 21st Century. This is possible because of the great efforts of QEF supporters. The QEF Spring and Autumn Ladies Lunches are more popular than ever. This year former Strictly Come Dancing judge and choreographer Arlene Phillips OBE was our special guest speaker. Each seat taken enables QEF to do just that little bit more to bring greater

The QEF Spring and Autumn Ladies Lunches are more popular than ever. This year former Strictly Come Dancing judge and choreographer Arlene Phillips OBE was our special guest speaker.

Ladies Spring Lunch Committee

Sue Witney, Chair
Rosemary Crawford
Sally Frost
Jenny Goy
Dorte Gray
Diane Hollingsworth
Liz Jones
Carol Smith

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The Blair Foundation
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independence and more opportunity to disabled people.

For Sue, “The buzz and atmosphere of the Ladies Lunches is the greatest pleasure, particularly at the end when I get stopped on the way out by streams of ladies saying how much they enjoyed themselves. That pleasure translates into how much value can be added to QEF Services.” Sue has great admiration for people who are “getting on with it and achieving”; those with a “you may not win but you can fight” attitude, who deserve all the support you can give.

For more information on our Ladies Lunches, or if you would like to volunteer and give up a few hours of your time, please contact Pat Lelliott, pat.elliott@qef.org.uk 01372 841213





A right royal patronage

This year the Royal diaries will be full of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. But before the festivities begin, 30 March 2012 had a particular significance. It was the 10th anniversary of the death of the Queen Mother.

Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, the 'smiling' Duchess of York, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and latterly the Queen Mother, was "visually one of the most enigmatic women of her era. She captivated the public eye for more than a century. A lady of dignity and elegance, she established the very highest order of what most would consider the epitome of royalty" says the introduction to QEF's The Platinum Years tribute book.

An Active and Enthusiastic Patron

Many will be aware that as the Duchess of York, she campaigned for the formation of a training college for people with disabilities in the 1930s; the formation of what was to become Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People (QEF). HRH Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex, describes QEF as "one of the Queen Mother's most cherished charities." "Her Majesty was an active and enthusiastic Patron and supporter from its birth."



1953 the Queen Mother became Patron and a coat of arms was adopted.

Regular Visitor

Over the years the Queen Mother demonstrated her lively interest with a number of visits, including attending the celebration of 50 years of training

Importantly the Queen Mother attended and spoke at a meeting in March 1934 at the Mansion House, convened by the Lord Mayor, to present the scheme for establishing the College.

It is not difficult to imagine where the Queen Mother's compassion for disabled people came from. Glamis Castle, the very one from Macbeth, her ancestral seat, was commissioned in World War I as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers and the teenage Elizabeth took an active role in helping to run the service. She clearly made an impression as one soldier wrote in her autograph book that she should be "Hung, drawn and quartered – Hung in diamonds, drawn in a coach and quartered in the best house in the land."

A Royal Wedding

Although Elizabeth was legally a commoner, Prince Albert, Duke of York, was determined to marry her and finally succeeded at his third proposal in 1923. They were married in April that year and, on her way into Westminster Abbey, the radiant

"QEF was one of the Queen Mother's most cherished charities"

**HRH Prince Edward,
The Earl of Wessex**

Elizabeth laid her bouquet on the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. Her feelings were publicly evident.

The college started training on 1 November 1934 but was not formally opened by the Duchess of York until 27 June 1935. A few years later in 1941, following a visit where she spoke to almost everyone on site, the then Queen expressed her wish that the name should be changed to Queen Elizabeth's Training College. Then in



at Leatherhead Court and approving the transition from a single college to a Foundation comprising several complementary activities.

Although our late Patron is no longer with us, her legacy lives on, diversified into four distinct services supported by a retail trading operation, a team of fundraisers, forward thinking trustees, specialist staff, a host of active volunteers and donations from some very generous people like you.



"Visually one of the most enigmatic women of her era. She captivated the public eye for more than a century"

Vision for the Future

In 2010, the celebration of the 75th Anniversary paid tribute to the tireless efforts of QEF supporters and staff. Now, against a background of considerable uncertainty in the economy and particularly in the areas of social care, health care and welfare to work, the vision remains the same, that disabled people should have the same opportunities as everyone else to achieve their goals for life.

Over the next few years QEF aims to expand its services into new areas of need, to undertake more campaigning where changes in legislation impact badly on the lives of disabled people and work in partnership with more charities aligned with QEF's vision. This vision underpins QEF's purpose and builds on the firm foundations that the Queen Mother helped to lay through her patronage and enthusiastic support.



Diane Cooper was officially presented with the James Hamilton Award by QEF Trustees Corinna, Lady Hamilton and Lynn Scotcher. The Award, inaugurated in 2010, recognises achievement against odds and a personal success story that embodies QEF's aim of helping disabled people live more independent lives.



A whole new world



“We all know that she has a great sense of humour and now she has an outlet to share it.”

The late Lord Hamilton, to whom this Award is dedicated, tirelessly served QEF for more than 30 years, with 17 of them as Chairman, raising over £1.8m during that time.

The Award comes with a £5,000 prize towards financing a special need for the recipient's goals. Diane says, “I do have difficulty with my verbal communication, although my comprehension seems good. I'm very expressive, so it's quite easy to tell whether or not I'm happy with something and I can say 'Yes' and 'No' quite clearly. I can make some signs and I also have a communication book, which I use sometimes. I sometimes get a little bit frustrated if I can't make myself understood.”

Communication is key for Diane who has 'severe' cerebral palsy which causes occasional spasms. She is unable to walk independently and

uses a wheelchair. The Award has enabled her to purchase a DynaVox, a communication aid which enables disabled people with speech difficulties to make their voice heard. The machine can be programmed by Diane to reflect her individual needs; for example, prepared questions or requests for particular assistance. Diane has very quickly learnt how to operate the machine and enjoys exploring its capabilities.

Diane's family joined her for the presentation and their pride was very evident. Her mother, Chris, was visibly moved when talking about what the Award meant to them all. “A whole new world has opened up for Diane. It has already made such a difference to her life. We all know that she has a great sense of humour and now she has an outlet to share it.”

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Merging MERU

Our Trustees have agreed with the Trustees of MERU (www.meru.org.uk) that MERU should become the latest member of the QEF family of charities. This took effect from 1 April 2012 and more formal announcements of the merger will appear on QEF and MERU

websites in due course. This Epsom-based charity provides bespoke engineering and technological solutions for disabled children. One of their latest products is a Travel Chair which will enable children with disabilities to fly in comfort and safety. It will be sold to airlines and launches at the Hamburg Aircraft Interiors Expo next week. *Photography: Andy Newbold*



VIP viewing

In February Rob Douglas CBE, QEF Chairman, and Centre Manager Sal Grier welcomed the Mayor and Mayoress of Sutton, Councillors Gerry and Kirsty Jerome for a tour of the QEF Mobility Services Centre in Carshalton.

The tour included viewing the static rig and demonstration area, a range of equipment and adapted vehicles, a roof-top box system for wheelchair users and the private training track.

Also under construction was a full size airplane cabin fuselage which will be used in a free seating assessment service for young disabled air travellers. Called **Try B4 U Fly** this new service will be launched in Summer 2012.

The Mayor said "I was very impressed by the range of services and the equipment at QEF Mobility. They provide a valuable service to those whose freedom and independence would otherwise be curtailed by disability."

QEF has been particularly fortunate to have some very selfless and generous supporters throughout its history who have left a legacy for their favourite charity.

A legacy for life

Remembering QEF in your Will is a precious legacy for life which will enable current and future generations of disabled people to face their future with more independence and opportunity.

Over 75% of the population donate to charity during their lifetime but less than 5% leave anything in a Will. This year, here at QEF, friends and supporters have been exceptionally generous. One kind gentleman even left a Stradivarius violin.

Some people like Margaret also kindly let us know of their intentions.

Margaret, now 77 years old, enjoyed a very sporty life. To begin with she saw disability as a physical limitation.

"They identify and maximise the ability of each person and encourage and enable them to enjoy as much independence as possible"

She taught deaf people and on a Sunday joined others in assisting wheelchair users from Banstead Place to church. In 1974 when the signage announced Banstead Place as the Brain Injury Centre, the impact on Margaret was quite profound. And it was this moment that put QEF first on her list of beneficiaries of her Will. As a single woman with little family she was happy to leave half to family and half to charity.

Since retirement Margaret has also volunteered in one of the QEF shops and naturally meets and converses with many customers. Picking out examples she told us of a number of local people had benefited from QEF, particularly from Vocational Services re-ordering their lives and bringing them confidence.

"Because it is local and supports people with a wide range of disabilities, helping them to become more independent. They identify and maximise the ability of each person and encourage and enable them to enjoy as much independence as possible" says Margaret, and this is why she wants to leave a 'legacy for life' to QEF. For this gift, QEF, and those who it supports, will be forever grateful.

Recent changes in inheritance Tax means that from 6 April 2012 if you leave 10% or more of your net estate to charity, the rate of Inheritance Tax will fall by 10% from the current 40% rate to 36%.

If you would like your generosity to last beyond a lifetime, please consider leaving us a gift in your will: you will be helping disabled people right across the country to believe in themselves and secure a positive future.

If you want more information please contact John Chamberlain, Director of Fundraising and Marketing, on 01372 841127 or visit www.qef.org.uk. If you would like an information pack on Legacies or Wills please email appeals@qef.org.uk.



Returning to work

“A life changing experience”...“new found confidence”...“I know what I can do what it takes to compete in the job market”.

These comments from disabled people receiving vocational training at QEF are the reason why working at QEF is so wonderful and why your support is so life changing.

Last year over 150 trainees began training courses at QEF, all with a clear focus on achieving sustainable employment. Every trainee has a personalised training programme which aims to build confidence and self esteem as well as the necessary work skills.

However we have concern for the future of residential training and the support the Government gives to it. The recent announcement of the

“Everyone backed each other. You could push yourself but could call on help if needed, which was always available”

Alistair

closure of many of the Remploy factories and the 17,000 disabled people who will lose their jobs, hid the fact that there was also a real threat from the withdrawal of funding for residential training for disabled people.

A recent QEF survey of trainees who left QEF in the past 5 years showed that 75% found employment and over 50% of them are still currently in work. As these disabled people are generally considered to be some of the hardest to help, that is an astonishing statistic.

A Variety of Jobs

And the range of jobs found is remarkably varied: George is now a Park Ranger; Guy, a University Administrator; Tony an Automotive Technician; George (a different one) repairs PCs; Phillip works for a plant hire company as a Customer Service Assistant; Simon is a Draughtsman for a builder; Joanne is a Packer; Katie is an Aviation Ops Executive and Diana works as a Dementia Support Worker and the list goes on. But let's tell you about Alistair.

Manchester born, 'surfer dude', Alistair Kettle joined the staff of QEF Vocational Services Trade Skills at the end of October 2011 as Technician/Trainee Assessor. With an Apprenticeship as a joiner and seven years on hard landscaping he was an ideal candidate.

Prior to this appointment Alistair might have been found working with the

Headley Court project as a QEF trainee, leading a small team in building and installing the potting tables. His energy is infectious and he rarely seems to sit still, which, when considering that only last year he could hardly walk, is a testament to his drive and determination.

Having broken his leg in a football match he suffered complications in hospital that resulted in 21 operations and the loss of 90% of his ankle muscle. He recently underwent his 22nd operation.

A Leap of Faith

The decision to come to QEF was a real leap of faith. He wanted to return to work but did not see himself behind a desk. He came to a VS Open Day and decided to take a leap of faith. Initially he thought that he might only be capable of bench work but really



wanted a job on his feet. VS offered a “safe environment” where he could back off if things got too much. His confidence steadily returned and he was able to test his limits for physical work.

“Explaining to someone how to do something, from nothing to understanding, is very rewarding, and not something that I had thought about before I took this job.”

Alistair is also involved in the manufacturing of garden furniture and other wood products as well as the organisation of work opportunities for trainees.



Dear QEF

Receiving a letter of thanks from someone who has been a recipient of our services is both welcome and humbling. In this particular case the letter was to our Neuro Rehabilitation Services. Here are some extracts:

"My name is Thomas Moss, I spent seven months in Banstead Place. I am writing this letter to thank and show my appreciation to all of the wonderful staff at QEF. After a motorbike accident in Thailand I was left with a severe brain injury. I couldn't see, couldn't move my arms or legs. I was in a pretty messed up position. The doctors told my mum I would not be able to ever walk again; I was not even able to go to the toilet by myself. There are so many people in Banstead I want to thank."

Thomas had messages for all the individual staff, describing how they had helped him to cope.

"Massive thank you to all of you for waking me up in the morning, starting my day off with a smile."

"Most importantly I could always talk to you about anything. And there were plenty of times when I had to get things off my chest."

"Before I got to Banstead there was so much I needed help with but with your help I am able to do things more independently."

"You made me realise that even though my voice isn't the same as it used to be, I still have the voice and communication skills to get back to work."

"Thank you QEF for all the computer equipment you have supplied. One of my main goals is to get back to work. This computer and software will help achieve that goal."

"So thanks again for everything. Tom."

We pass these thanks on to you for helping us to continue to provide much needed services for Tom and the many people who, through trauma or illness, acquire a brain injury.

Forthcoming Events

Look out for latest details on our website
www.qef.org.uk, Facebook or Twitter @qef1

Virgin London Marathon

London Sunday 22 April

Give your support to Team QEF by donating on their Justgiving sites. Details at <http://www.qef.org.uk/events/marathon-for-qef/>

For further details contact:

Annie Slater, annalisa.slater@qef.org.uk 01372 841130

Ladies Autumn Lunch

October, Date to be announced

Duchess's Stand, Epsom Racecourse

Fresh from enjoying Arlene Phillips, a great lunch and super shopping at our Ladies Spring Lunch be sure to watch out for the latest details of our Autumn Lunch.

For further details contact:

Pat Lelliott, pat.elliott@qef.org.uk 01372 841213

QEF Bikeathon

Leatherhead Sunday 16 September

Full details of moving this event up a gear to be announced but if you love cycling for challenge or pleasure this will be for you.

For further details contact:

Annie Slater, annalisa.slater@qef.org.uk 01372 841130

Ben Nevis Challenge

Ben Nevis, Scotland

Saturday 29 September to Monday 1 October

Get your boots on and get hiking if you are hardy enough!

For further details contact:

Annie Slater, annalisa.slater@qef.org.uk 01372 841130

Guinness and Oyster Luncheon

Mansion House, London EC4

November, Date to be announced

Our famous luncheon, now in its 46th year. Sponsored by Diageo and co-sponsored by Oracle.

For further details contact:

Pat Lelliott, pat.elliott@qef.org.uk 01372 841213

Open Garden Scheme

New in 2012 we would love to hear from you if you would like to open your garden during the summer in support of QEF. The hard work you put into your garden can help make a real difference to the lives of disabled people. So, whatever size garden you have, if you can host the afternoon and run a tea and cake stall we would be delighted to support you.

For further details contact: John Chamberlain, john.chamberlain@qef.org.uk 01372 841127 and, if you would like to, register your garden as part of our Open Garden Scheme.

